

Riverside Public Library

Central Library Building
Riverside, CA

Summary Memo

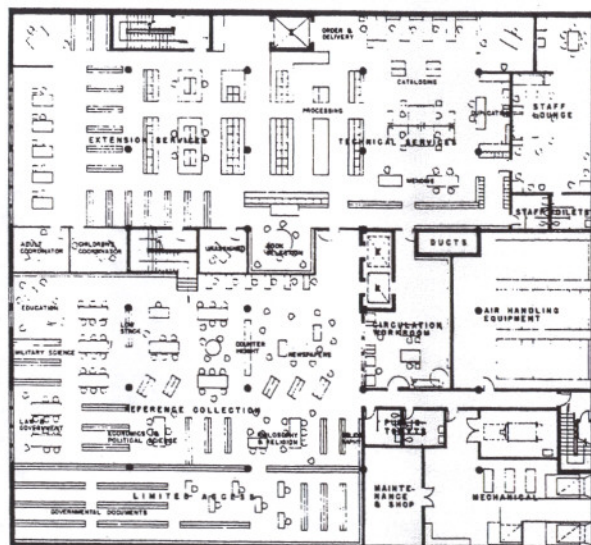


AnnBeha Architects

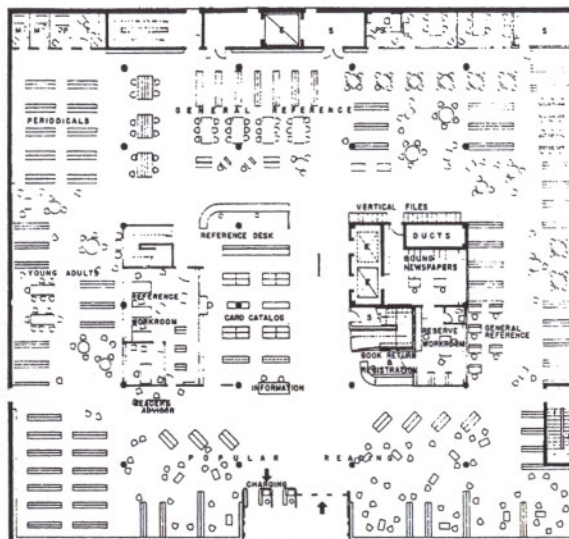
20, September 2002

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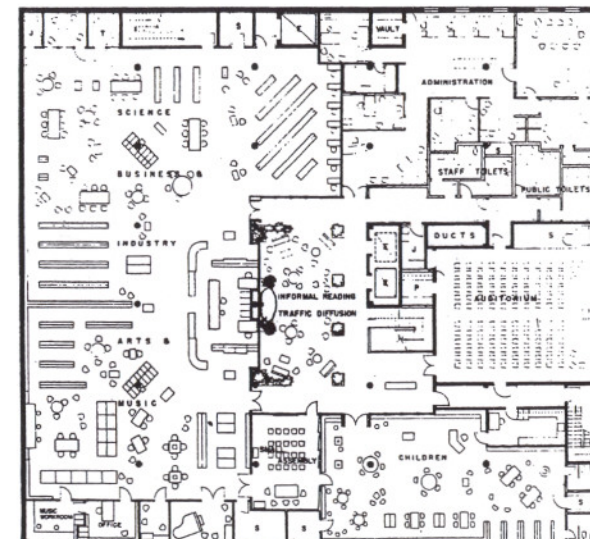
Background



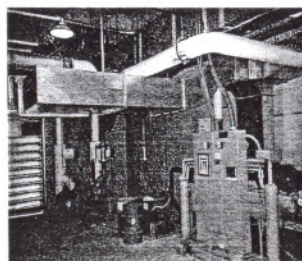
Basement Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan



Inadequate Mechanical System



Overloaded Storage



Overburdened Work Area

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Early Images of Main Library

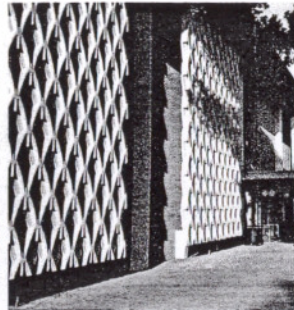
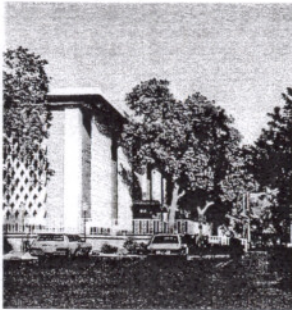


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Introduction

Ann Beha Architects were retained by the Riverside Library to carry out a two-day review of "Main Library," Riverside's primary public library facility at 3581 Mission Inn Avenue, on the 18th and 19th of July 2002. The purpose of this review was to consider the potential of the building and site, give an overview of their opportunities and constraints, and develop conceptual planning and design goals.

Judith Auth, Library Director, Larry Crilly, Administrative Services Manager, represented the Library throughout the two-day review. Staff members in charge of specific library operations were interviewed individually: Marion Mitchell-Wilson (Fund Development Manager), Sue Struthers (Children's Librarian), Collette Gonzales (Circulation Supervisor), Carol Dodds (Acquisitions Librarian), Karen Cramer (Senior Librarian/Reference Manager), and William Swafford (Local History Librarian). Meetings were held with Wendall Tucker and Bob Saber, Library Trustees, and with Bob Hall, Building Services Superintendent for the City of Riverside.

Thomas M. Hotelling AIA, and Robert Miklos FAIA represented Ann Beha Architects during the two-day review in Riverside. Our observations and recommendations are briefly summarized below, and described in more detail later in this memo:

- *Central Library should remain at its present very central and desirable location on Mission Inn Avenue.*
- *A new visual image is needed for the building, one that welcomes patrons and makes Central Library a destination of choice.*
- *The existing 1965 building is a valuable building resource that should be retained and renovated for collections storage, offices, and other library support needs.*
- *Selected public spaces in the building (such as the Sendai Court room on the second floor) that still retain original design detail should be restored, as a reflection and record of the building's heritage.*
- *Additional library space is needed; there are a variety of expansion options for the 1965 building that should be explored to accommodate both library needs and community needs.*
- *The Library currently plays an important role in the Riverside community, above and beyond specific library services, as a community center. Its auditorium, meeting and other community spaces should be enlarged and made accessible during the day and after hours to the Riverside community.*
- *A Feasibility Study and Master Plan should now be undertaken, to fully assess the Central Library building, explore options for its renovation and expansion with cost estimates, and identify a final option with a budget and schedule.*



Detail of Facade



Main Entrance



Main Library in Riverside

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Background

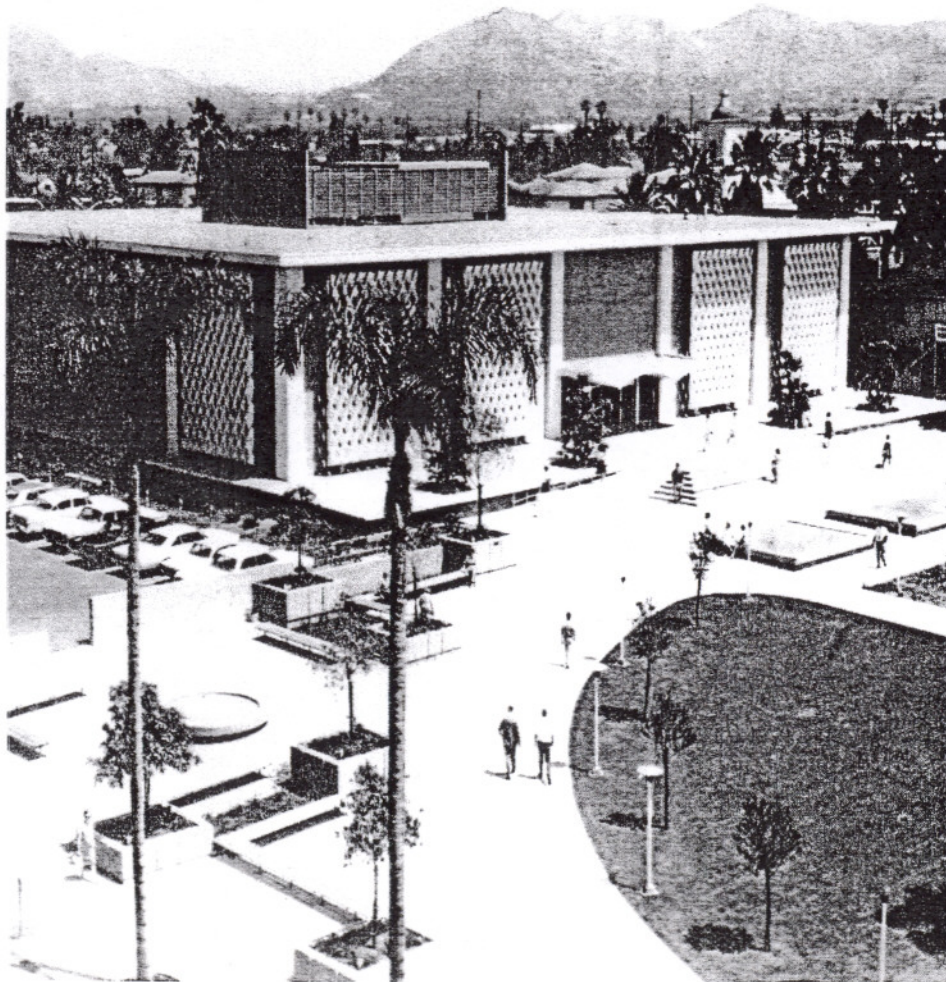
The Riverside Library System

The Riverside Library has a long history of community service. Since its opening in 1870 in the parlor of Judge John W. North's home on Vine Street, it has consistently provided comprehensive library services. Today it serves a City population of 255,000, with five library service points and two computing centers in addition to Main Library.

Main Library Building 1965

Main Library was designed by the Riverside architectural firm of Moise, Harbach, Hewlett and opened in 1965. It occupies the majority of the city block bounded by Mission Inn Avenue, Sixth Street, Orange Street, and Lemon Street. It is a three-story building with a flat roof, on top of which is a penthouse for HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air handling) equipment and elevator machinery. Pre-cast decorative screens and an arched entry canopy provide the only detail relief to the severity of the building's exterior. Its structure is reinforced concrete, with exterior walls of brick with pre-cast stone trim. It is our understanding that the building's structure was designed so that a fourth and fifth floor could be added, but that current seismic codes preclude this possibility.

Main Library's three floors provide 61,420 square feet of space, designed to accommodate in 1965 a total of 300,000 volumes and seating for 550 patrons. Judging from historic photographs, its interior was comprehensively and thoughtfully planned; its layout, interior detail, lighting, millwork, and high-quality furnishings were fully coordinated with each other, and no doubt made the building a very pleasant and comfortable destination for patrons.



Main Library

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Background

Main Library Building 2002

Few changes have been made to the Main Library's exterior since 1965, other than paving and landscape revisions in front of the building. On the interior, successive renovations since 1965 have significantly eroded the original design concept. Patron needs, collections, services, and the staffing required to support them have seriously outgrown the building. Today Main Library houses over 600,000 items, including books, audio-visual materials, government documents, and a local history collection. It has the largest reference collection of any public library between Los Angeles and Phoenix. It serves many more patrons than ever anticipated, and provides only half the number of patron seats that State standards recommend. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems while fully operable, do not address the present and future needs of the Library. Support spaces, such as the loading dock and rest rooms, are inadequate for building demand and do not meet today's building and access codes.

Any renovations to Main Library, however, must be seen in relation to a larger scope of work, one that includes expansion of the building and a new image for it. Renovation, expansion, and image are addressed in this memo in the context of four topics:

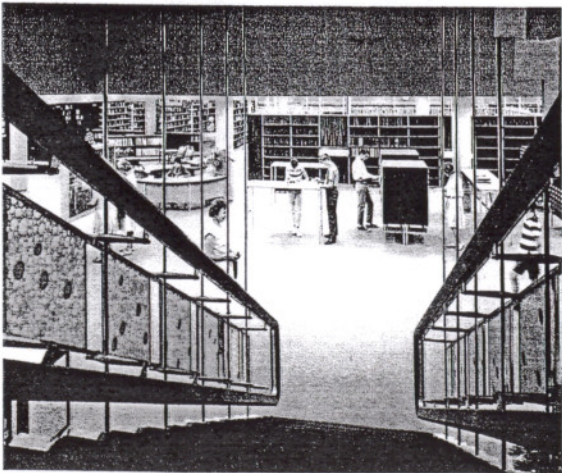
- *Location*
- *Welcome*
- *Growth & Flexibility*
- *Community Role*



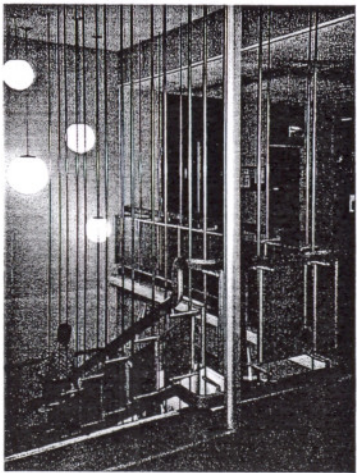
Main Library in 1960s



Main Library Today



Main Library in 1960s



Main Library Today

Location

City Plan

Main Library is located on the site of a previous library building constructed in 1902. The choice of this site followed the "City Beautiful" planning formula in vogue throughout the United States in the late 19th century, whereby important cultural institutions, like libraries, museums, and other civic buildings, were clustered together and given the most prominent locations as urban centerpieces.

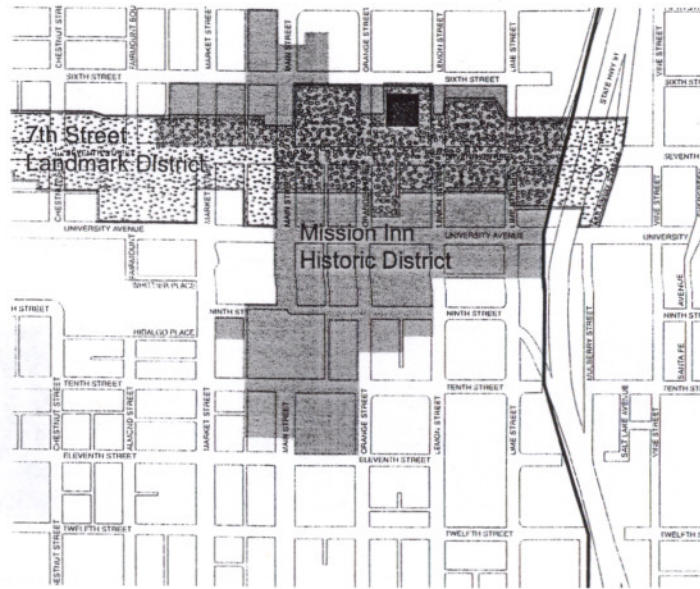
This proved to be a winning formula for Riverside, resulting in the impressive cultural corridor of Mission Inn Avenue. With a prime location on this corridor, Main Library is accessible on foot from surrounding neighborhoods, and by car and public transport from elsewhere in the City. Its site is an excellent one for a public library. The activity of the surrounding cultural institutions and the rejuvenation of the Mission Inn, have created a neighborhood renaissance, of which the Library is both beneficiary and contributor. Main Library is ideally located and should stay at its present site.

Pedestrian Connections

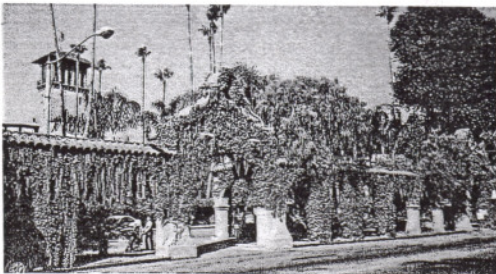
The original vision and plan of Riverside included a pedestrian walkway (along what is now Mission Inn Avenue), well defined by arcaded building walls and vine-covered pergolas. Visitors arriving on the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe Railroad Station had a wonderfully animated first impression of Riverside as they walked to the Mission Inn. The continuity of this concept could be re-established on Mission Inn Avenue, and in front of the Library, with both building and landscape elements not unlike the street edge in front of the Mission Inn.

Topics for further consideration include:

- Historic photos and precedent.
- Options for more off-site parking.
- Approaches to security and the homeless (architectural, as well as operational).
- Connections (through landscape, walkways, lighting, etc.) to surrounding buildings.



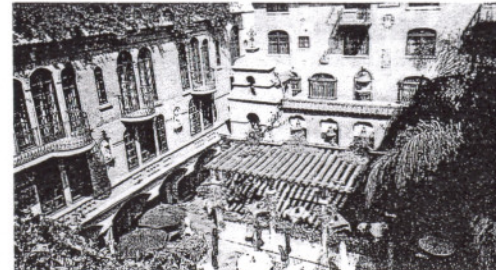
Location Plan



Mission Inn Arcade along Mission Inn Avenue



Municipal Auditorium Garden



Mission Inn Courtyard

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Welcome

Image

The source of Main Library's problematic exterior image lies in how the original designers chose to interpret modernism and in its unwelcoming public face, and not in the fact that it is a 1960's modernist building. The majority of texture around the building is solid, hard, and unfriendly. Exterior wall surfaces and pre-cast grills are expansive, with little human scale to them. Almost without any windows, the building's exterior offers few hints to the wonderful breadth of services, collections, and knowledgeable staff contained within, and little visual enticement to enter. Its setback from the street (in contrast to all other buildings on Mission Inn Avenue), the density of plantings that screen it, and the flight of steps leading up to its front door, all contribute to an image that is more mysterious than welcoming.

Way-Finding

Interior way-finding (ie the ease with which one navigates the inside of a building) is challenging. Upon entering the building it is difficult to learn what services are offered or where they are, even with the help of signage and friendly staff. The staircase connections to the second floor and to the basement are minimal. They are also not near each other and difficult to find, and there is little indication on the first floor that two-thirds of the building's contents are located on other floors.

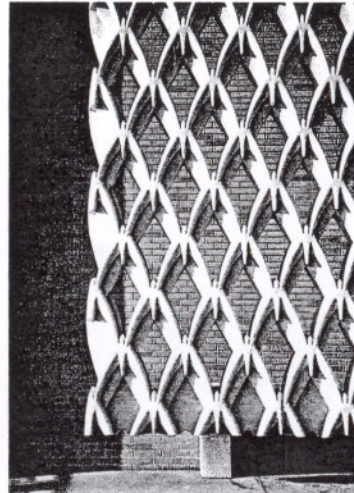
Patron reading areas in the Library are not defined rooms; rather they merge into collections and other service spaces, and as such are not memorable or intimate. It is likely that most patrons use these spaces because they are the only ones the building provides, and not because they necessarily enjoy being in them or actively seek them out. There is no one central or memorable interior public space in the building, and none that serves to organize the building's activities.

Topics for further consideration include:

- Exterior image issue - options might include making the original building more transparent with more glazing, or constructing new additions in front of or around the present building, scaled to other structures on Mission Inn Avenue.
- Interior way-finding – options might include a new central hall through the building, or a small central atrium space open to all floors, to orient patrons.
- Reorganizing of interior planning and creation of beautiful, comfortable, and memorable spaces that patrons and staff look forward to using.



Main Entrance



Detail of Pre-cast Grill



Difficult Way-finding



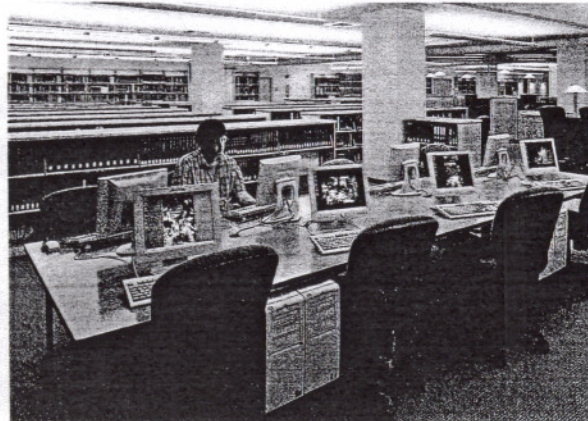
Circulation Desk, Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine - Before



Circulation Desk, Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine - After



Technology Commons, Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine - Before



Technology Commons, Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine - After

Growth and Flexibility

New Needs and Services

Libraries today are in the midst of great change, offering services never anticipated, and new technologies for accessing knowledge never considered. More and more information is available electronically, requiring new kinds of spaces for equipment and for instruction, all of which will continue to change. Very likely print collections will continue to grow, and this growth will in turn require the ability to expand print collection areas and to periodically reconfigure them.

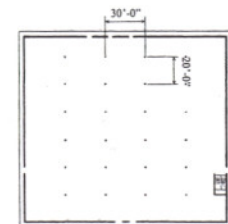
Together, these trends all speak to a need for spatial flexibility in library design, and the ability to make changes easily and economically. The Architects of the 1965 Main Library building were very far-sighted on the topic of flexibility. They chose for the building's structure a reinforced concrete slab and pan system, supported by concrete columns in a 20' x 30' bay spacing. This allowed for all interior partitioning to be non-structural, meaning that partitions can be easily added – or removed – giving great flexibility to interior planning. This flexibility, coupled with the generosity of the structural bay size, is ideal for libraries today, and speaks very strongly to retaining the existing building in any scheme for library expansion on this site.

Main Library's site is a generous one that allows for expansion without necessarily making significant changes to the existing building. Expansion would be possible in front of the building (along Mission Inn Avenue), providing a new public face if above-ground, or possibly underground, maintaining a plaza with landscaped courtyards. The building could be expanded in back, providing additional space for library support needs. Expansion may even be possible to the sides of the building, constructing over, and incorporating within, the existing parking areas. While any expansion is dependent on zoning and other civic approvals, there appears to be considerable flexibility in how expansion can be accommodated on the site.

Topics for further consideration include:

- Update of 1992 Building Code study.
- Catching up with past space deficiencies and planning for the present needs; anticipating the future needs and planning for them.
- Compact storage and/or off-site storage, and the implications on space needs for collections at Main Library.
- Wireless technology and its impact on flexibility of interior planning.
- Options for building expansion on the site.

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Structural Diagram of Typical Main Library Floor

Community Role

Community Centers

Public libraries today continue to be repositories of information, whether in print or electronic form. Through computer data networks, they have taken on new roles in employment placement, network training, Internet access, and as destinations for tapes, CD's, video, and DVD's. More and more, they are becoming community centers, places where the elderly, families, and students of all ages gather. Public libraries can bring families together and by serving all age groups, effortlessly sponsor multi-generational interaction.

As completely democratic institutions - ones that provide programs and services to a diverse population, regardless of economic, social, ethnic status, or language - public libraries play strong civic roles. Main Library plays just such a role in Riverside, quietly and effectively reinforcing community. Through renovation and expansion, it could play a further role in the ongoing revitalization of downtown Riverside.

Outdoor Civic Amenities

The outdoor spaces at the front of the Library could be developed for both special programming such as children's story hour, folk dancing, the Dickens' festival, first Sundays, musical and theatrical presentations, as well as for casual use. These spaces should be intimately scaled, well defined and able to be secured or supervised. There is a legacy of such garden courts throughout Riverside's historic core - the courtyards and restaurant gardens at the Mission Inn, the sunken garden at the Municipal Auditorium, and the museum café court at the YWCA building. Creating spaces like these at Main Library would 'connect' the Library to the core of the historic district and contribute to the unique pedestrian experience of Riverside. They could be either linked to a café or commercial vendor, or to a significant library program area such as children's services, to ensure that they will be supervised and controlled.



1960s Photograph of Main Library



Riverside Municipal Museum



Courtyard at the Mission Inn

Community Role

Building Expansion

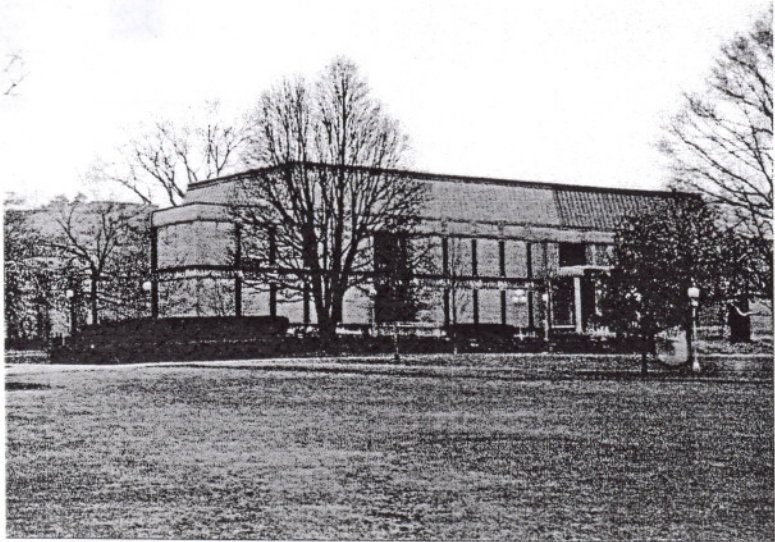
A building expansion in the open space in front of the Main Library along Mission Inn Avenue offers many opportunities to both reinforce the character of the surrounding historic district, and to make the library friendlier, more inviting, and animated.

While these additions might house a community room, a children's library, or a café, they should be scaled to reinforce the pattern of buildings in the district. Use of materials and detail compatible with surrounding buildings would further contribute to the district's cohesiveness. Renovations that included large windows would provide transparency to the building's interior, creating an inviting and better-scaled building, one that is better connected to the street.

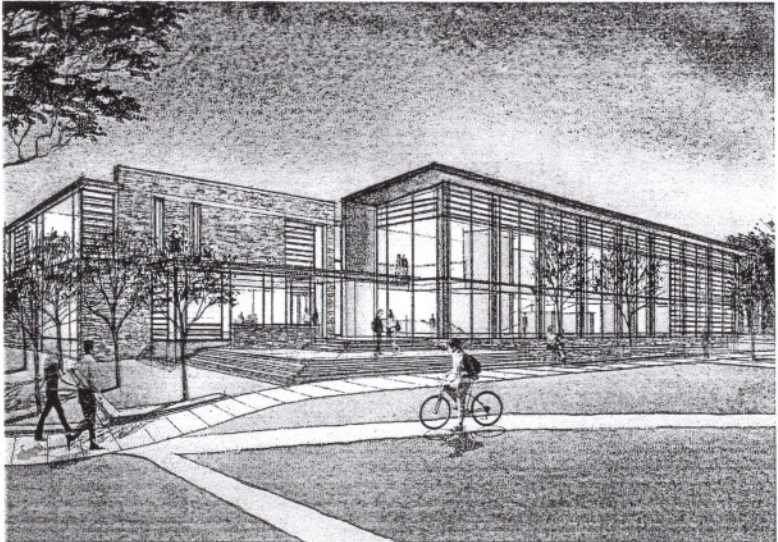
Changes to the library building and its plaza can be accomplished in such a way as to both reinforce and connect this important resource of the city to its historic core. Yet at the same time they could contribute to the district's vitality by creating changes that are exciting and elevate the image of the existing building's modernism. Through renovations and additions to Main Library, Riverside can create a dramatic new statement that represents both the future and its heritage.



Bornholm Cafe



Before - Skillman Library - Lafayette College, Easton, PA



Design Proposal at Entry - Skillman Library

Community Role

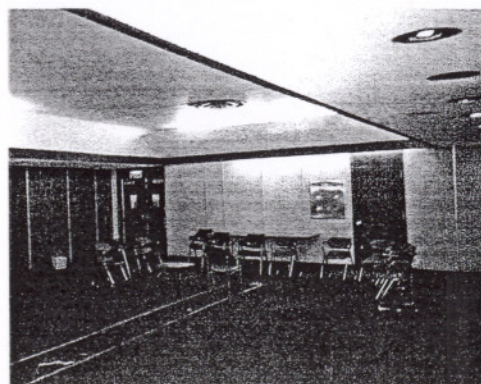
Children's Area and Auditorium

The locations of specific spaces within the Library building need to be rethought and redistributed to be more accessible for today's needs. There has been exponential growth in the numbers of children and young adults that use Main Library, either for organized events with parents and teachers, or for after-school study in the afternoon. The current children's area is not adequate in size for the community, and its remote location on the second floor is difficult for parent drop-off.

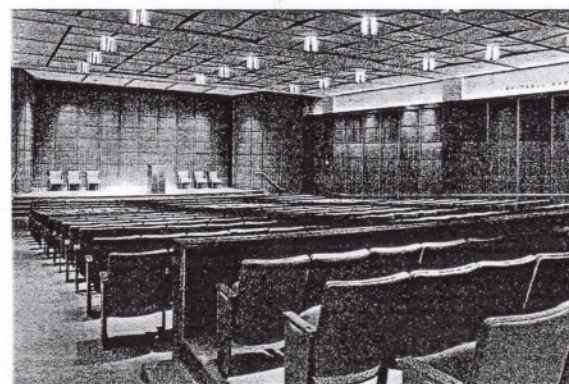
A design study was previously undertaken that recommended a new children's area on the first floor of an addition in front of the building. While this would be an excellent location for the children's area in terms of access and visibility, there are other spaces, such as the auditorium, that could also be appropriately located here; options should be studied. The present auditorium, remotely placed on the second floor, can't be used outside of regular library hours because of its location within the Library's security perimeter. A new auditorium, located toward the front of the building, would give a much-improved new venue for library events, and offer everyone in Riverside access to this space for other community events outside of regular library hours as well. While a feasibility study would need to be done to confirm the need for a civic space like this, our understanding is that there are few smaller (100-200 person) spaces in downtown Riverside and that there is growing need for such spaces, for both civic events and also for private ones, where rental income is a possibility.



Child Activity at Main Library



Auditorium at Main Library



Auditorium at Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR

Community Role

Other Community Spaces

There is an international trend in public libraries to present the range of their materials and services in a more retail format, whereby small selections of each library service or collection are displayed in a public entry area, much as retail facilities display the range of what they sell in display windows. Through signage and adjacency, patrons are then directed to the related resources centers in other parts of library buildings or to other branches. Given the extensive breadth of services and collections in the Riverside Library system, this is an option well worth considering for Main Library.

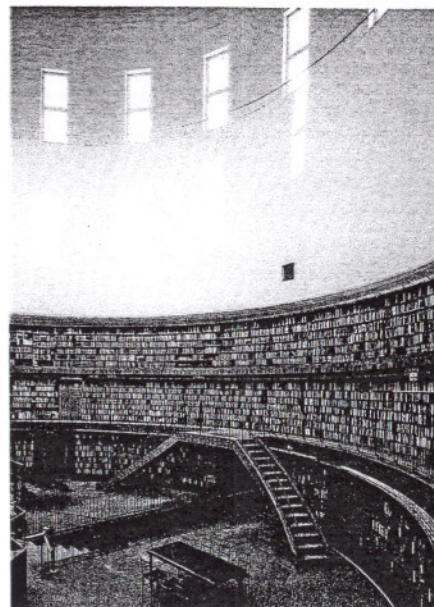
Other possible community spaces might include an exhibition area, either for changing exhibits of library collections, or for community exhibits, or for joint ventures with other cultural venues in the neighborhood. Many libraries now provide coffee carts or café spaces, adjacent to but very separate from library collection and patron areas, on a model much like the Barnes and Noble or Borders bookstores. These amenities can encourage use of libraries by a broader range of people and often provide additional revenue sources for operations and programming.

Topics for further considerations include:

- Redistribution of activities within the building to maximize public use.
- Reconsideration of children's area and young adults area.
- Shared library and civic uses for auditorium and smaller meeting areas and classrooms.
- Links with other cultural organizations in the neighborhood, and shared needs.
- Viability of a coffee cart or café, and interest in franchise for this.
- An outdoor reading garden, within the security confines of the library building, for casual reading, and for outdoor classes and events.
- Joint ventures with surrounding museums and academic institutions (such as the School for the Arts and the Children's Discovery Center).
- Development of the local history collection as a resource center, in alignment with the tourism initiative in Riverside.
- Suite of conference rooms with an auditorium that could serve conferences and seminars in collaboration with the Mission Inn.

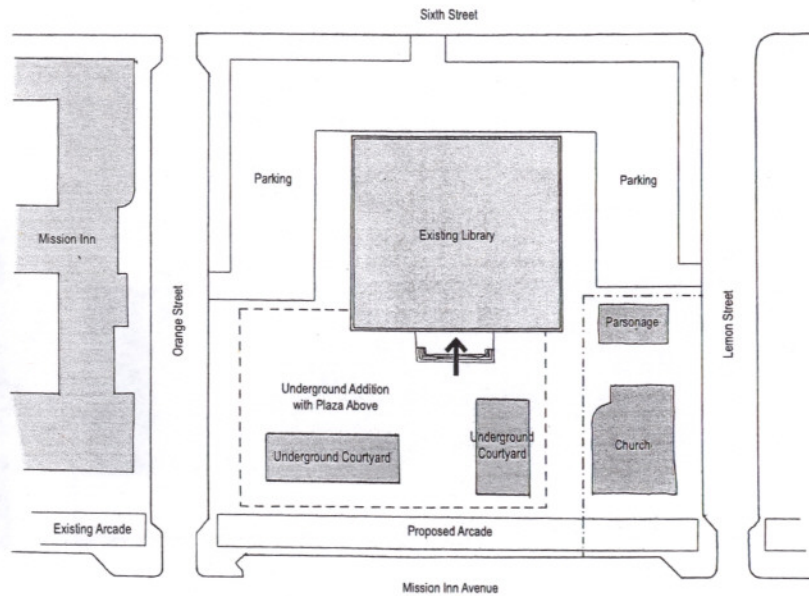


Gentofte Public Library, Hellerup, Denmark



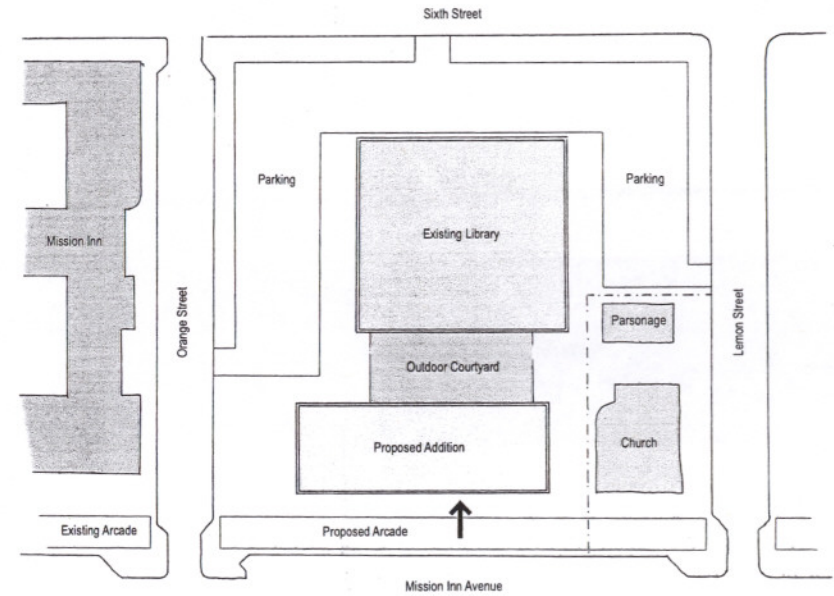
Stockholm Library, Stockholm, Sweden

Conceptual Diagrams



Scheme A - Underground Courtyards

A series of courtyards cut in to the plaza allow light to filter in to an underground addition. The plaza above remains as a landscaped park. In all schemes, a proposed arcade continues the existing Mission Inn arcade along Mission Inn Avenue.



Scheme B - Mission Inn Avenue Addition

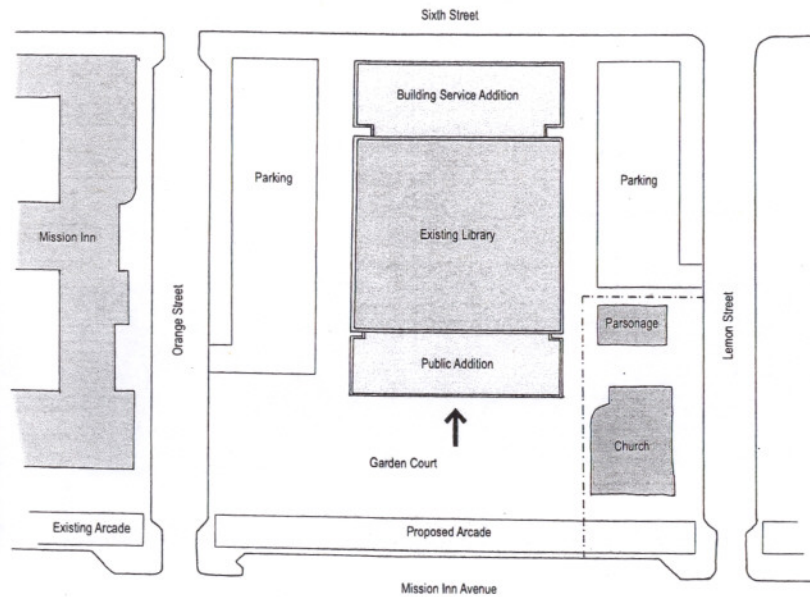
An addition along Mission Inn Avenue creates a secure courtyard between the new building and existing library.



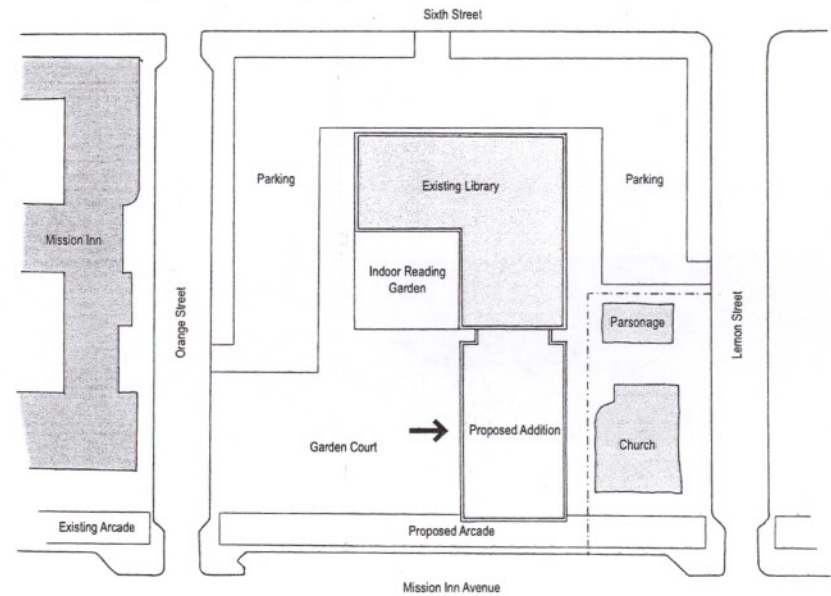
Courtyards and Arcades in Riverside

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Conceptual Diagrams



Scheme C - Front and Back Expansion
An expansion behind the existing library creates a new building service core to organize the building. The expansion in front of the library creates a new public face for Main Library.



Scheme D - Reconstruction and Expansion
Reconstructing one corner of the existing library into an indoor reading garden oriented to the Mission Inn allows light to flood the interior. An expansion along Mission Inn Avenue creates a new public image for Main Library.



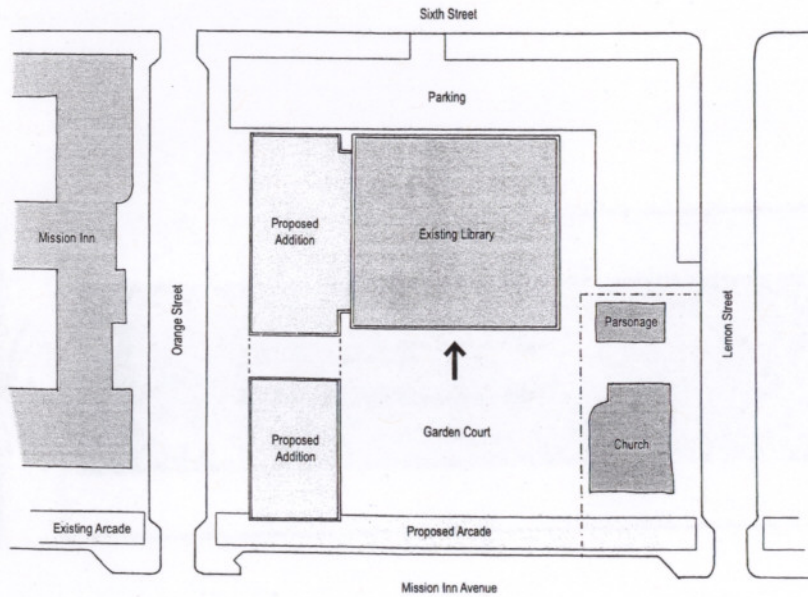
The British Library, London, England



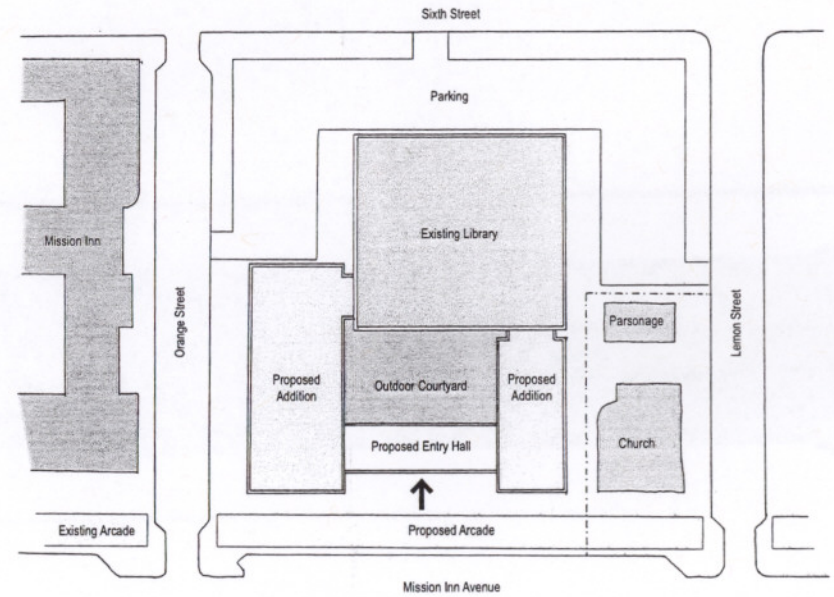
The British Library, London, England

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Conceptual Diagrams



Scheme E - Orange Street Addition
An addition along Orange Street creates a new relationship between the library and the Mission Inn. A landscaped Garden Court in front of the existing library provides a welcoming public park.



Scheme F - Central Courtyard Addition
Additions that front along Orange Street and Mission Inn Avenue allow Main Library to develop a new relationship with the Mission Inn as well as a new public identity on Mission Inn Avenue. A secure central courtyard recalls the courtyards of Mission Inn and historic Riverside.



Courtyard at the Mission Inn

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Conclusions

With the perspective of 25 years of experience with adaptive reuse of cultural and educational facilities throughout the USA, we feel that the Main Library building and site offer many excellent options for improvement and expansion, and that the building's image can be transformed. Furthermore, we believe that working with the existing building by renovating and adding to it, is a more cost effective solution than replacement or relocation.

The expansion of Main Library provides both the opportunity for a more cohesive Mission Inn Avenue, and also the opportunity to enhance ongoing revitalization efforts in the neighborhood through expanded library services, community programming, and new civic spaces.

As a next step, Riverside Library should consider undertaking a professional feasibility study and master plan for Main Library. The goals of this would be to assess the existing conditions of the building, identify present and future library and community needs, explore design and financial options for the building's renovation and expansion, and establish a conceptual design direction. Accompanying the master plan would be a magnitude of cost estimate, as well as three-dimensional drawings and models that present the spirit of the design, assist in communicating design intent, and build community consensus for the implementation of the project.

This is a pivotal time for public libraries in America. Their relevance to the communities they serve and the enrichment they provide is becoming increasingly essential to these communities. The renovation and expansion of Main Library is a key project for the Riverside community and one which merits serious consideration.



1st Sundays, December 2001



1st Sundays, December 2001



1st Sundays, March 2002